IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 22 and 24 without prejudice or disclaimer and AMEND claims 1, 9, 11, 19, 21 and 23 as follows.

1.   (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

enforcing a charging policy at a network element, wherein the charging policy is to be applied to data packets reaching the network element during a packet data protocol context, the packet data protocol context comprising a plurality of data flows, with each data flow being distinguishable by a set of flow parameters, wherein said charging policy defines charging rules per flow of the plurality of flows;

observing said the data packets reaching said network element, the data packets each including at least one flow parameter, and detecting at least one data flow of data from flow parameters included in the observed data packets;

mapping each of the data packets to detected data flows in accordance with the at least one flow parameter included in the respective data packet;

matching said detected data flow flows of data to an enforced charging policy; and

applying said enforced charging policy to said data flows[[,]] thereby generatingto generate charging information.

2.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

forwarding said generated charging information to a charging system of the communication network.

3.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the enforcing is performed upon start-up of the network element.

4.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the enforcing is performed upon activation of the packet data protocol context.

5.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the enforcing is performed dynamically during a life-time of the packet data protocol context.

6.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

initializing data volume counters upon enforcing said charging policy.

7.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said data flows are Internet Protocol (IP) based packet data flows, and said flow parameters comprise at least one of an IP header field, a transport header field, and an application level information.

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8.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said

charging policy comprises at least one flow parameter, and at least one of a

charging/accounting type, an accounting event trigger, a charging metrics, and a tariffing

indication.

9.   (Currently Amended) A-The method according to claim 1, further

comprising:

creating a plurality of charging policies, each charging policy of the charging

policies comprising at least one flow parameter, and at least one of a charging/accounting

type, an accounting event trigger, a charging metrics, and a tariffing indication;[[,]]

selecting a charging policy based on offered services and subscriber

information;[[,]] and

distributing said selected charging policy to at least one network element to be

enforced at said at least one network element for charging of data reaching said at least

one network element during a packet data protocol context.

10.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein said

charging policy is selected for a type of said network element.

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11.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:

an enforcing unit configured to enforce a charging policy at a network element to be applied to data packets reaching the network element during a packet data protocol context, the packet data protocol context comprising a plurality of data flows, with each data flow of the plurality of data flows being distinguishable by a set of flow parameters, wherein said charging policy defines charging rules per data flow of the plurality of flows;

an observation unit configured to observe said data packets reaching said network element, the data packets each including at least one flow parameter, and detect at least one data flow of data from flow parameters included in the observed data packets;

a mapping unit configured to map each of the data packets to detected data flows in accordance with the at least one flow parameter included in the respective data packet;

a matching unit configured to match said detected data flow flows of data to an enforced charging policy;

an application unit configured to apply said enforced charging policy to said data flow flows; and

a generation unit, responsive to said application unit, configured to generate charging information.

12.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising:

a forwarding unit configured to forward said generated charging information to a charging system of the communication network.

13.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said enforcing unit is further configured to be responsive to a start-up of the network element to perform the enforcing.

14.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said enforcing unit is further configured to be responsive to activation of the packet data protocol context to perform the enforcing.

15.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said enforcing unit is further configured to dynamically enforce during a life-time of the packet data protocol context.

16.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising:

an initialization unit configured to initialize data volume counters and/or time counters responsive to enforcing said charging policy.

17.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said data flows are Internet Protocol (IP) based packet data flows, and said flow parameters comprise at least one of an IP header field, a transport header field, and an application level information.

18.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said charging policy comprises at least one flow parameter, and at least one of a charging/accounting type, an accounting event trigger, a charging metrics, and a tariffing indication.

19.   (Currently Amended) A̶n̶ The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:

a creation unit configured to create a plurality of charging policies, each charging policy of the plurality of charging policies comprising at least one flow parameter, and at least one of a charging/accounting type, an accounting event trigger, a charging metrics, and a tariffing indication;

a selection unit configured to select a charging policy based on offered services and subscriber information; and

a distribution unit configured to distribute said selected charging policy to at least one network element, with the charging policy to be enforced at said at least one network element for charging of data reaching said at least one network element during a packet data protocol context.

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20.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said charging policy is selected for a type of said network element.

21.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:

enforcing means configured to enforce a charging policy at a network element to be applied to data packets reaching the network element during a packet data protocol context, the packet data protocol context comprising a plurality of data flows, with each data flow of the plurality of data flows being distinguishable by a set of flow parameters, wherein said charging policy defines charging rules per data flow of the plurality of flows;

observation means configured to observe said data packets reaching said network element, the data packets each including at least one flow parameter, and detect at least one data flow of data from flow parameters included in the observed data packets;

mapping means configured to map each of the data packets to detected data flows in accordance with the at least one flow parameter included in the respective data packet;

matching means configured to match said detected data flow flows of data to an enforced charging policy;

application means configured to apply said enforced charging policy to said data flow flows; and

generation means, responsive to said application means, configured to generate charging information.

22.   (Cancelled)

23.   (Currently Amended) A computer program embodied on a computer-readable storage medium, the computer program configured to control a processor to perform operations comprising:

enforcing a charging policy at the network element to be applied to data packets reaching the network element during a packet data protocol context, the packet data protocol context comprising a plurality of data flows, with each data flow being distinguishable by a set of flow parameters, wherein said charging policy defines charging rules per flow of the plurality of flows,

observing said data reaching said network element and detecting at least one flow of data,

matching said detected flow of data to an enforced charging policy, and

applying said enforced charging policy to said data flow, thereby generating charging information observing the data packets reaching said network element, the data packets each including at least one flow parameter, and detecting at least one data flow from flow parameters included in the observed data packets;

mapping each of the data packets to detected data flows in accordance with the at least one flow parameter included in the respective data packet;

matching said detected data flows to an enforced charging policy; and

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applying said enforced charging policy to said data flows to generate charging information.

24.   (Cancelled)

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